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opening essay promises greater consistency of treatment than we find. The chapter on "French Influence," too, gives a definite promise of method that is never fulfilled. Here we must confess to a feeling of relief, for when the author leaves his well-tilled field of personal appreciation to chase the *ignis fatuus* of a realism thesis, we prepare to follow with no little apprehension for our cherished prejudices. But Mr. Burton was merciful, and contented himself, in the sequel, with a few generalizations that did little damage. Despite his courageous prefatory defense of this chapter, we believe the book would have been better without it.

Professor Burton has not written the history of the novel. As he has not pretended to do so, it would be unfair to quarrel with his work on this account. But it is really a matter of regret that one who shows himself so well qualified to take a larger view of the subject should not have struck deeper; we could wish that he had begun, say, with Malory, and traced the growth of this important art form through the stages of formation which best reveal the English people's need of such a mode of expression and the essential secrets of its hold upon life. A study of fiction beginning as near the top as Richardson, omitting to analyze the negative implications of the premature Elizabethan fiction, overlooking the great works of Bunyan in which the novel had its vital start, ignoring the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, which are at least as meaningful in the history of the novel as are the *Interludes* in that of the drama, such a study cannot possibly penetrate far beneath the surface of things.

Since Lanier's brilliant, though erratic, treatment of the subject, no historian of the novel has attempted to explain its rise and growth in terms of the life which generates it and which it reflects and interprets. There are points in the reading of Professor Burton's book when we are confirmed in the fear that criticism of fiction has somehow reached its anecdotage without passing through its prime. The old changes are persistently rung—of Richardson and his serving-maid confidantes, of the moist emotionalism of the eighteenth-century reading public, etc., etc. This anecdotal habit, together with a tendency to lurch after startling stylistic effects, are the only positive blemishes in a worthy and sincere series of criticisms, which include much that is suggestive and stimulating. In particular we would commend the chapters on Jane Austen, Trollope, and Hardy.

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The Common People of Ancient Rome: Studies of Roman Life and Literature. By FRANK FROST ABBOTT. New York: Scribner, 1911. Pp. xii+290.

This volume belongs to a type of books which classical scholars should produce in increasing numbers, books which humanize and liberalize the cold facts of Roman and Greek history and civilization. Professor Abbott discusses certain social, economic, and political questions of ancient Rome and

has other chapters on the language and literature, correlating the past with the present in a manner so interesting, because so human, that the book will furnish attractive and profitable reading even for non-classical students. The Americans are not an isolated people in the history of the race, living at an isolated period of time, but they are a part of the past notwithstanding the strong appeal which frenzied agitators make to "live in the present." By studying the successes and failures of our forefathers, economists and reformers may save time and effort in the attempt to solve the age-long problems that confront us now.

One of the most suggestive chapters in the book is "Diocletian's Edict and the High Cost of Living," describing the attempt of that emperor in 301 A.D. to regulate conditions that were somewhat similar to those of the present day. An imperial proclamation was issued fixing the maximum price at which beef, grain, eggs, clothing, and other articles could be sold and prescribing the penalty of death for any who attempted to sell at a higher figure. A comparative table of prices is given and the fact brought out that while the Roman workman received in wages only about a ninth or a fifteenth of what the American workman receives the average price of pork, beef, mutton, and ham in 301 A.D. was about a third of the average prices of these articles today. It is recorded that this effort of Diocletian to reduce prices failed; to regulate such matters by governmental restriction is difficult, for the fault lies deeper in the social system.

Another chapter deals with private benefactions among the Romans, another with corporations and unions, another describes the life of a Roman politician. Thus these chapters have to do with the practical everyday life of the common people, and offer interesting reading for the American citizen of the twentieth century. Earlier sections of the book relate how Latin became the language of the world, what the speech of the common people was and how it grew into the modern Romance tongues, the poetry of the common people, and finally a somewhat more technical essay on the origin of the realistic romance as embodied in the first-century novel of Petronius.

The reviewer repeats that we need more books of this kind which popularize the ancient classical civilization, for only by understanding the past can we ever hope to understand the present.

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